

To The Presiding Judge,

My name is Adam J. Levine. I served in the United States Marines Corps as team leader in the Force Reconnaissance community and have lead Marines all over the world (to include Iraq, Afghanistan, other parts of the Middle East, Africa, as well as South East Asia). After my service I took a position as a Special Operations Cadre for GORUCK. Which is a company that thrives on building better Americans by teaching teamwork, leadership and communication through a very unique type of endurance event. It is there that I had the pleasure of meeting John Steele.

I have known Mr. Steele for the past three years, as he has been quite the regular at the GORUCK team based endurance events that I have lead. I have lead hundreds of these particular events, and there are not many individuals that I have come to know personally. Mr. Steele has participated in at least 20 of my events (lasting up to 24 hours straight) and has proven to be a natural leader, and possessed the ability to be an outstanding teammate with solid values. Mr. Steele has come through during the darkest hours of night in order to support his teammates and persevere successfully as part of one cohesive unit. Case in point, I distinctively remember multiple events where Mr. Steele stepped up help guide and mentor other participants to get through hard times, and even sacrificed his own self for the greater good of the team.

On 9 September 2017, during a twenty four team based endurance event in Cleveland Ohio John devised a plan to distribute over one thousand pounds of additional weight the team had to move for more than 10 miles. His quick planning and leadership was ultimately the reason the team was successful for that particular portion of the event. Mr. Steele personally took control of the heaviest weight the team had to carry and delegated the rest of the weight accordingly. Not only was he able to carry the weight but he was able to maintain command and control of that team for the period he was assigned as the team leader.

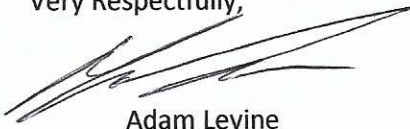
On 11 November 2017, this time on the outskirts of Phoenix Arizona, Mr. Steele was there for his team during a twenty four hour endurance event. I had checked in on station as the primary cadre for the event at the time, and it was then my colleague informed me that the team was struggling to stick together as a team and perform as one. Shortly after checking back in on station I could see exactly what my colleague was referring to. The team had missed multiple time hacks and certain members of that team were not able to perform at the level necessary to be successful. Mr. Steele personally requested to do the additional work in order for those other participants who were hurting to get a bit of a break. It was the middle of the night and everyone was cold, tired, and sore. But Mr. Steele knew if he could put himself out there for the greater good of the team then they would be able to come out together as one.

A year later in Santa Barbara, California on 11 November 2018 Mr. Steele proved his worth as a Bonafede team player once again. This was one of the smallest twelve hour classes I have lead since I held my position as a Special Operations Cadre for GORUCK. Mr. Steele was there to assist a much older participant to successfully complete the event. Mr. Steele knew that I was not going to let off the intensity but Mr. Steele was there to inspire, motivate, and encourage his team to be able to successfully complete the tasks I put in front of them. His steadfast ability to think on the fly as well as look out for those in his team is the reason why the team was able to one hundred percent successfully complete that event. Constantly throughout that event Mr. Steele was checking on his teammates, and

even taking additional weight to carry so the others could rest as much as possible, all the while continuing to move on their feet.

These are just a couple of examples of what I consider a great teammate and leader to be. What stands out to me the most, however, is the fact that after working over 250 of these events, there are very few individuals that I have grown to respect and even call my friend. John is one of those few. I have learned that he acts exemplary throughout the GORUCK events, but he also does in his day to day life. He has become one of my good friends and the epitome of a great father and a role model citizen. Although we all make mistakes in life, I believe that the mistakes regarding Mr. Steele in this case are severe, I also believe he acted out of character for who he truly is. I believe Mr. Steele to be a caring, compassionate, and a unselfish individual who puts himself before others.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Levine', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Adam Levine